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875 were turned over to Greece and Yugoslavia, respectively, after the first World War; while Dimiter was from the section of Thrace which Bulgaria was forced to surrender. Since the teachers had such backgrounds it was no wonder that adorning one of the classrooms was a sign, "NEMA MIR DOKATO NEUILLY" or "There will be no peace as long as the Treaty of Neuilly is in force."

The director of the school was a vigorous woman with splendid preparation for her task. She told me on several occasions how disappointed she was that her teachers took so little interest in helping the peasants improve their way of life. They were supposed to spend Sunday afternoons visiting the homes of their pupils in an effort to advise parents in matters of child care and standards of hygiene. Actually, the teachers, being all too human, preferred to spend the week end in Sofia rather than reform the unenthusiastic adults.

[565] 527 659 The intelligentsia were usually seen in their glory at some great occasion such as the celebration of an important holiday. The event which caused most excitement during my six years of residence in Bulgaria was the birth of Prince Simeon, heir apparent to the throne of his father, King Boris. The exercises which were held in Dragalevtsy four days after the royal birth in 1937 showed how the intellectuals worked hand in hand, since the school, the church, and the state were so closely allied.

[796] The crowd had to wait at least forty-five minutes for the priests from the monastery who were to help Father Sava with the liturgy of the *vodosvet*, or consecration of the holy water, whose sprinkling gave official religious recognition to the closing of the school year. Then the mayor began to speak the high-sounding phrases which the villagers loved to hear. He told them how significant for Bulgaria was the birth of Prince Simeon.

> June Sixteenth [he said] will be written in golden letters in the history of Bulgaria. June Sixteenth marks the day when an heir was born to the throne of Bulgaria. Our school house has no name, so I recommend that we petition for the right to call our school "Prince Simeon II." The first Simeon who reigned a thousand years ago was called Simeon the Great. I feel sure that Simeon the Second will likewise go down in history as Simeon the Great.

[871] In honor of this great occasion, the Government has decreed that the marks of every student will be raised, so that no one will fail in any subject. [Hurrah!

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Hurrah!] That's right; nobody will fail. No pupil will repeat the class next year! [Hurrah! Hurrah!] All department marks likewise will be raised and anyone who has been expelled from school will be accepted back on probation. The government is cancelling over a billion leva in unpaid taxes and is freeing thousands of prisoners . . . . [871]

Before he finished he led the children, and such adults as would join, in further cheers for Prince Simeon, for King Boris, and for Queen Iovanna. After the school choir had sung the national anthem and the "Hymn to the King," all filed inside for the official graduation exercises. There were more patriotic songs and at least twenty declamations with such titles as "Three Days at the Battle of Shipka," "To our Teachers," "A Prayer to God," "I Like the Priest," "I am a Temperance Girl," and "Nature." Displays of the children's handwork, as well as these recitations, brought some recognition to the teachers who had worked behind the scenes. 527 659 871

The director in her remarks thanked the mayor and the priest profusely and the parents casually for the help they had rendered during the past year. When she was about to present the diplomas, such bedlam broke loose that few could hear the compliments she paid the brightest pupils, who had received as special awards from the mayor books on war and religion. The exercises concluded with the presentation of a large bouquet from the pupils to the school director, who politely accepted the flowers on behalf of all the teachers.

The intelligentsia just described had more importance than their village duties seemed to indicate. They were the channels through which the national state, the national church, and the national school system expressed themselves. No member of this select group was Dragalevtsy-born. Their high status rested not only upon the influence they wielded as representatives of powerful institutions, but also upon the fact that they were educated. Education, along with the patient accumulation of land and money, was one sound way of raising one's social position, and those who had persevered in its pursuit received due honor. As one father said to his son upon sending him to school: "If you don't study you will plow, sow, and work in the fields, and where will you get then?" 565 554 [555]

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686 *What happened if a man owed some money and didn't pay?* If the sum owed was over 1,000 leva, the people had to go to Sofia to court. If it was under 1,000 leva, the people appealed to the village court (the mayor was judge, and the registrar was secretary). The creditor made an application for the sum due, and had either to give a certificate that the sum was due or, having no certificate, swear by a cross and the Bible that his claim was just.

683 *What happened in case two men got into a fight and hurt each other?* In case of a fight or a disturbance of the peace, the men were subject to fine up to 500 leva. However, the mayor smiled when he said: "I haven't given any fines for fighting yet, for I am a man with a Christian soul." Should the mayor feel less virtuous he would fine a drunk, together with the tavern keeper who let him get drunk. The fine would range from two to three hundred leva, leniency being shown to drunken men because they are "not responsible for their actions when drunk."

425 *How did people transfer property?* The transfer of animals was performed at the *Obshtina.* A bill of sale was made out and signed by the mayor. The transfer of land and houses had to be made through a notary public in Sofia since the banks in such cases usually needed to be consulted regarding indebtedness on the property.

659 ● *How were public lands administered?* Because the forest pertaining to the village was not large enough to justify a special forester, it was placed under the care of the *Okoliyski* (county) forester who was in charge of planting new trees. A forest policeman, regularly employed by the *Obshtina,* saw to it that the villagers cut no wood without the special permission of the local authorities. The land belonging to the *Obshtina* had decreased greatly during the past twenty years because of its sale as building sites. If the *Obshtina* decided to sell land valued at less than 200,000 leva, then the *Okoliyski* governor could give permission. For more than that, the Minister of Interior had to approve the transfer.

653 *Who saw that roads were kept up and bridges repaired?* If a bridge was broken, the fact was reported to the mayor, who sent a man to repair it. The State took care of all the roads outside the village, and the *Obshtina* of those inside.

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almost entirely of the intelligentsia. The peasants no longer had much to say about the employment of teachers, or what or how they taught. They and their children accepted what the national government, through its local representatives, provided for them. They took it or left it, but mostly took it.

The national government, along with its other activities, maintained a close connection with the national church. Before the liberation of Bulgaria, the practice arose of having three or five members act as a church board in each village. Even if there happened to be no church building, this group was elected to see about the construction of one. Such a board followed the familistic practice of expecting elders to manage local affairs. After the growth of the national state the board was continued, but subjected to outside control. In Dragalevtsy it consisted of five people: the priest (who was the president), a treasurer, and three other village men who acted as a control committee to audit the work of the old board which they succeeded at the end of its two-year term. In the past the biennial election was held on a Sunday morning immediately after church. But the government took care to see that only those men who had the right to vote *politically* were eligible to elect the church board from a list of candidates prepared by the priest. As the priest prepared his slate with the help of the older people in the village, his choices usually met with the approval of the majority of men.

A candidate had to be an Orthodox Christian by baptism, should never have been in a lawsuit, should not be a drunkard, thief, and the like, nor an atheist opposed to the church. The elections had to be approved by the Sofia Metropolitan, or the high church court, thus removing the authority still further from the village. An office of an elective nature such as this carried a great deal of honor with it. The duties of the office were not burdensome because the church possessed no lands to be administered. Traditionally the church board was supposed to aid in enforcement of Sabbath observance, but members were not particularly zealous in carrying out this obligation. The priest had been having trouble of late with one board member who had become such a tippler that the board's prestige was suffering. If some question needed to be decided, as was the case about five or six times

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659 794 a year, the priest asked the board members to assemble at the church, minutes were kept, and no outsiders attended. The government's influence was further felt during the period 1934-1937, when all political elections were suspended, and with these all church board elections too. No one was eligible to vote.

659 869 771 As the national school and church authorities had not been satisfied with the type of religious training that the children had been getting in the average peasant home, they had set up in each village an organization called "The Association for the Orthodox Christianization of Bulgarian Youth." In general, the work of the group consisted in teaching the school children the significance of the iconostas, church ceremonies, and other related matters. School hours were used, and attendance was compulsory. The school director, who had been asked by the Archbishop in Sofia to conduct the work of the association in co-operation with the priest, said that they had had about twenty-five meetings during the year. Parents and others who were interested attended these meetings. This was one activity which the peasants had accepted quite willingly because, as one woman said, "the children are kept off the streets when there is a group gathering, and thus do not learn so many bad things." This was the woman's way of berating parents for failing to take better care of their children. But fundamentally the acceptance was based upon the traditional recognition of the church's importance. In the past, whatever had bolstered up the established church had bolstered up the familistic system.

179 181 596 Such a barrage from the batteries of commerce, government, and education had left the familistic way of life in Dragalevtsy battered but not crumbling. The peasants were still amused at the intense activity of the intelligentsia; the few who were asked to confer with the authorities enjoyed reporting back to their families and friends just what they said and did. The people co-operated in the campaigns for this-and-that only when they knew that the mayor would send the policeman along if they did not co-operate. They attended lectures when ordered to do so, but they joined few of the organizations planned outside. Perhaps the best indication that this beehive of governmental activity was still on the surface was the failure of the peasants to seek advice from the intelligentsia who were supposedly there to help

[For a detailed account, see category 116, pp. 161-176 -- Analyst]

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Churches and Religion

Introduction

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The vast majority of the Bulgarian Nation belongs to the Eastern Orthodox Christian Church, or Greek Catholic Church, which is also the church of the Russians, Greeks, Serbians, Rumanians, as well as the Armenians, Syrians, and other Near Eastern nationalities. Second in number is the Moslem religious minority, with the Jewish, Roman Catholic, and Protestant denominations representing only minute fractions of the total population.

Unlike the Roman Catholic Church, the Eastern Orthodox Church has no central international authority. It consists of several rather loosely-connected national churches which have emerged at one time or another from the jurisdiction of the Patriarch of Constantinople. It has been the persistent tendency of the various national churches to emancipate themselves as separate entities and cooperate with the respective national states. In the case of Bulgaria, all efforts of the State, from the establishment of the Princedom in 1878 to the Communist seizure of power in 1944, have centered upon the creation of a national church independent of foreign primates and symbolic of national unity. Therefore, Bulgarian legislation, until 1949, was concerned primarily with the nation's Eastern Orthodox Church.

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The Act on Religious Denominations put into effect by

659 the Communist Government in 1949, sought to establish a uniform regime for all religious denominations in the country. Nevertheless, some of its provisions, especially Section 3, recognize the historic role of the Bulgarian Church and attempt to use the established tradition for the purposes of the communist policy.

Thus, the present status of the Church in Bulgaria cannot be properly evaluated without a survey of its past.

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I. Christianity in Bulgaria, 865 -1870

A sizable Bulgarian Kingdom came into being in 680 A.D. in the area between the Danube and the Black Sea bordering on the Balkan territories of Byzantium.

Seeking international recognition, one of its kings, Boris I, agreed in 865 A.D. to the conversion of his people to Christianity under the auspices of the Byzantine emperor and the Patriarch of Constantinople, Byzantine missionaries and priests were swiftly dispatched to Bulgaria to evangelize the country. Five years later, the Patriarch conceded, on insistent Bulgarian demands, the right of the Bulgarian King to have a Bulgarian archbishop with authority to crown kings and ordain bishops, retaining, nevertheless, supremacy over the new ecclesiastic hierarchy.

The extension of the Patriarch's authority to Bulgaria was disliked in Rome, and contacts were soon established between Boris and Pope Nicolaus I. However, the territorial proximity of Byzantium prevailed as a factor and Boris' original orientation

175 The Exarch's office continued to be maintained in Constantinople while the churches in Bulgaria were administered by the Holy Synod in Sofia.

World War I failed to yield the above-mentioned Macedonia and Thracian territories to Bulgaria; what is more, it sanctioned the loss to Romania of Southern Dodrudja (retroceded to Bulgaria in 1940).

In 1921, a Bulgarian National Church Council convened in Sofia in order to revise the Statute of the Exarchate. The Council established the procedure for the election of the new Exarch by the Bulgarians in Bulgaria alone without the participation of the Bulgarians in Thrace and Macedonia that the elections were continuously postponed. They were held at last in 1945 under the Fatherland Front government (infra).

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III. Status of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church within Bulgaria until 1944

A. Relationship between State and Church

The basic principles regulating the status of the Bulgarian Church are stated in Article 39 of the Constitution of 1879;

Article 39

The principdom of Bulgaria, which constitutes an integral part of the Bulgarian ecclesiastical area, shall be under the religious administration of the Holy Synod, the supreme spiritual authority of the Bulgarian Church, wherever that authority may be located. Through the latter, the

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Princedom preserves its link with the Ecumenical Eastern Church in all matters concerning the dogmas of the faith.

The opening phrase suggests that the Bulgarian Church is something of a higher authority than the State authority of the Princedom of Bulgaria. However, this has never been observed and the Bulgarian State has always striven to control the Church. There existed, however, an apparent linkage and close cooperation between the Church and State.

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In the broad sense of the term the Church was a state institution and its officials, agents of the public authority.* The budget of the Church was part of that of the State, viz., of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Denominations, which represented the state in all religious matters. All bishops, priests and administrative employees in the various parishes and dioceses received from the government modest salaries which supplemented their income from fees received for religious rites and services performed by them. Aside from that, the churches, and especially the monasteries, disposed for their subsistence, of valuable properties, such as fields, forests, or buildings, either bought by them or willed to them by parishioners. All that netted a sizable income.

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* Ivan Altinov, Divroce in Bulgaria: Brakorazvodnite Conflicti v Bulgaria (Sofia, 1929), p. 9.

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These revenues, even though they were affected to some extent by the land reforms of the Agrarian Government of Alexander Stambeliiski, not only met all needs not fully covered by the State Budget, but enabled the Church to erect quite monumental buildings. The most remarkable of these were the Palace of the Holy Synod, the two seminaries in Plovdiv and Sofia, the Divinity Academy (which was accepted by the University of Sofia as a theological faculty) and last but not least, the Archiepiscopal Palace in Sofia, of which Archbishop Stefan, later elected Exarch of the Bulgarian Church, had said that it was "a small Versailles".

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The Church did not take part in the management of State affairs, since it officially did not mix in politics; but it always supported the State, always willing to bless the latter's public functions with religious ceremonies. National holidays were celebrated with a Te Deum at which the local bishop officiated, together with the prescribed number of priests. All consecrations were prrformed before the eyes of the people by representatives of the Church, bishops or priests --as the occasion required.

Customarily the National Assembly upon its official opening began its work by attending a religious ceremony (blessing of the water) at which the Archbishop of Sofia swore in the deputies. In general, oaths of ministers of state, deputies, officials, soldiers, and witnesses in court were always administered by clergymen. It may be said that nothing

659 ever occurred, not even military parades, without the blessing and prominent presence of the representatives of the Church.

Thus, a close cooperation was established between the State and the Church, and the Bulgarian people considered it quite important even though Bulgarians were not very religious. The Bulgarian people saw in the church a national institution for which they had fought bitterly before they had obtained statehood, and which was a source of encouragement in good and of solace in bad days. These were not two separate concepts but actually two parts of one and the same national concept. Given this union it is not at all astonishing that some prelates temporarily left their religious duties and assumed political or diplomatic functions, as it was the case, immediately after the liberation of Bulgaria, of Clement, the Bishop of Stara Zagora, who in 1879-80 was Prime Minister for several months and later headed the Bulgarian delegations frequently sent to St. Petersburg before the Russian Tzar. In later times and during World War II, two bishops, Stefan of Sofia (a Russophile) and Paisii of Vratza (a germanophile), became notorious by their endeavors to play a part in politics and aspire to the position of Prime Minister.

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692 B. Ecclesiastic Courts, Marriage and Divorce*

Not being separated from the State, the Bulgarian Church performed, up to the advent of the communist regime, certain public functions. Religious celebration was required for the validity of a marriage, vital statistics were kept by the clergy and even the legal questions of marriage and divorce

000 public schools.

793 A certain amount of religious instruction was given in the primary and secondary schools, religious history being included in the curriculum. However, these subjects were not taught by clerics but by the laymen, in most cases graduates of the theological schools. Clerics served as instructors in the secondary schools only in the first years after the establishment of the Bulgarian State when the demand for educators exceeded the available number of teachers.

IV. Status of the Bulgarian Church Developments Since 1944

A. General Survey

[178] 659 The seizure of power on September 9, 1944, by the Communist-dominated Fatherland Front coalition signalized important changes in the position of religion and the religious denominations. Ideologically, the dominant Bulgarian Communist Party was committed to a negation of all religion as the "opium for the masses". Practically, its policy toward religion and the Orthodox Church in particular was determined by more realistic considerations.

The communists could only desire to destroy the relationship established between the State and the Church. Likewise, they could not but desire to reduce and if possible, to destroy the great freedom which the Constitution of 1879 granted to the minority denominations allowing them to "be

governed by their ecclesiastical authorities under the supreme supervision of the minister of state." (Article 42).

However, the communists did not attack the Church but on the one hand, they proceeded very cautiously in religious matters not wanting to offend openly the feelings of the people; on the other, under a new policy toward religion inaugurated by the U.S.S.R. they did not undertake to destroy the Church but use it for their purposes. The general line established by the Russian Communist Party in 1942 called for a truce with and the utilization of religion for the sake of political expediency. A lesser factor for this attitude was the necessity to operate within a political coalition in which there existed strong forces of moderation.

Thus, in its policy toward religion the Fatherland Front government declined at first to adopt a clear-cut formula and proceeded with individual measures primarily dealing with the Orthodox Church. The regime governing the status of the Orthodox Church until 1944 was tacitly suspended.

The communists did not proclaim immediately the complete separation of the Church and State, which they had originally planned. This could have provoked great discontent not only because of the national and moral prestige enjoyed by the Bulgarian Church, but also because of the deprivation of priests and bishops of the financial aid which they received under the State budget. Thus, the communists confined themselves to the elimination of the instruction of religion, which until

659 798 then had been conducted in all schools, to the removal of the presence of church officials at the taking of the oath and to the introduction of civil marriage, which became obligatory, instead of the religious one, which hitorto was required [671] (Articles 1 and 2 of the Decree having force of Law concerning Marriage, Durzhaven Vestnik, No. 108, May 12, 1945).

Although there was no formal declaration of the separation of Church and State, representatives of the church no longer appeared at public functions and the part which the church played in public life was mutely but radically reduced.

659 Nevertheless, the government continued to subsidize the church by allotting funds to it in the State budget. Moreover, in a purely political move, it amended the Statute [671] of the Exarchate with a special Decree-Law (Durzhaven Vestnik, No. 11, January 15, 1945) and authorized the election of an Exarch. Apparently the government preferred to deal in the future with one man - the Exarch - instead of a Synod. Again the Bulgarians were always strongly in favor of having a single prelate at the head of their national church.

793 In January 1945 Archbishop Stefan of Sofia was elected Exarch of the Orthodox Church of Bulgaria. The new Exarch was an ardent Russophile, but not a bolshevik or communist sympathizer. Immediately after the election he journeyed to Moscow to pay a visit to the Moscow Patriarch, Alexis, which demonstrated a recognition of the primacy of the Moscow Patriarchate, and sent a delegation to the Patriarchate of Constantinople to negotiate for the removal

793 communist initiative the Exarch in 1948. He was banished to a remote villa in the province town of Karlovo. At the present time the Bulgarian Church is again administered by the Holy Synod.

• 659, 642 The general principles of the communist policy toward religion were finally embodied in the so-called "Dimitrov Constitution" passed on December 4, 1947. Its Article 78 states:

> Freedom of conscience and religion, as well as freedom of performance of religious rituals is guaranteed to all citizens.
>
> The Church is separated from the State.
>
> A special law shall determine the legal status, the question of material support, and the right of internal autonomy and self-government of the various religious communities.
>
> The misuse of church and religion for political purposes and the creation of political organizations on a religious basis is forbidden.

There is no mention of the status and functions of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church. All questions pertaining to this Church, as well as to the minority denominations in the country, were left in abeyance until February 1949, when a general law on religious denominations was passed on the strength of the cited constitutional provision (infra, B). This law did, among other things, mention the Bulgarian Church. This law is analyzed and translated in the next Section B.

B. The General Law of 1949

1. Summary and Analysis

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The Communist Government promulgated, on March 1, 1949, a general law on the religious denominations in the country (Durzhaven Vestnik, No. 48, March 1, 1949). The full text of the law is given infra, (2). This law was promulgated while the trial of the Protestant pastors was in progress. Although it recognizes that the "Bulgarian Orthodox Church is the traditional religion of the Bulgarian people associated with its history" and suggest that "it may become the people's democratic church" (Section 3), the law introduces a uniform regime for all denominations, the over-all detailed control of which is vested in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. While it restates the constitutional provisions for freedom of conscience and religion and separation of church and state, the law recognizes only the exercise of "religious rituals" (Section 2) and makes no mention of activities for the propagation of the faith. To exist, a denomination requires recognition by the government granted through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Section 6) subject to arbitrary withdrawal. Recognition by the government of a denomination carries with it the status of a legal entity for its church.

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The governing bodies of the denominations are responsible before the government (Section 9) and must be composed of Bulgarian nationals (Section 10). Clergymen who "act against the democratic institutions of the state" may be

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Thus, in a veiled but easily enforceable form, the law of 1949 established a complete control over religion by the state. By means of the various supervisory devices the authorities have the legal power to suppress, restrict, harrass or use the religious denominations, including the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, as their policies may require.

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2. Translation of the Law

Law Concerning Religious Denominations
(Durzhaven Vestnik, No. 48, March 1, 1949)

Section 1

The freedom of conscience and religion shall be guaranteed to every citizen of the People's Republic of Bulgaria.

Section 2

The religious denominations, as religious communities, shall be separated from the State.

They may freely exercise their religious rituals within the limits set by the Constitution and the laws of the country.

Section 3

The Bulgarian Orthodox Church is the traditional religion of the Bulgarian people associated with its history and has such form, contents and spirit that it may become the people's democratic church.

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(viel) for women, and the change from the Arabic to the Latin alphabet.

These fundamental reforms provoked a schism at first, and for a long time Mustafa Kemal and his followers were considered infidels by other Moslems. The Bulgarian Government, keenly aware of the potential menace presented by the compact and numerous Turkish minority, was only too happy to exploit this schism, which caused the Turks in Bulgaria to turn away from Ankara and Constantinople.

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Bulgaria refused to exert any pressure on the Moslem minority to force it to organize its social and religious life along the lines advocated by the Kemalists. The Moslems were left entirely free to keep the Sheriat and the Arabic alphabet. Nothing was changed in the Turkish clergy and schools in Bulgaria. This was all the easier to effect because the separation of the Church and State, which is the core of the Kemalist reforms, had long been realized in Bulgaria by the very fact of the establishment of the Christian Bulgarian State side by side with an ethnically foreign Moslem minority.

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Left entirely to itself, this minority, whose nationality and religion have always been scrupulously respected, organized itself on the basis of the Sheriat, which governed every phase of its civic and religious life, particularly in matrimonial matters - marriage and divorce (i. e., repudiation of the wife by the husband), as well as in the matters of inheritance.

This organization, which developed side by side with

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the Bulgarian State, was maintained by the Bulgarian authorities by means of the institution of the muftis, whose network covered all the Turkish-inhabited regions and which was centered at Sofia in the person of a Great Mufti, elected by the regional muftis. The Great Mufti was assisted by a Council elected by all the Moslems in the country. Thus, the Turkish minority not only enjoyed equal political rights with other citizens, but also was provided with a system of self-government concerning all matters regulated by the Sheriat. Such was the privileged position of the great Moslem community, which was able to support a considerable number of mosques (no less than two thousand) and schools (more than one thousand) and to publish several newspapers in its own language.

The Kemalists were extremely dissatisfied with this state of affairs. It frustrated the expansion of their reforms beyond the frontiers of Turkey. The Government in Sofia, however, took a firm stand and refused to change anything in the direction desired by Ankara. What was more, the Turks in Bulgaria, being a compact and a large group, were a source of votes for the politicians, who did much to raise their primitive standard of living. Great projects were carried out by the Bulgarian State over several years whose purpose it was to provide drinking water and irrigation for the arid region of Doliorman (Northeastern Bulgaria) predominantly populated by Turks. [312]

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was idyllic, in spite of a rather constant exchange of uncomplimentary remarks with the Greeks.

The first approach to the Church by the Communists was made rather gingerly and was not unfriendly. They seemed, indeed, to regard this venerable institution as a political instrument worth keeping in repair. True enough, religious instruction was banned from the public schools, and the control of marriage legislation was reserved to the State. Previously the Church not only had married aspirants to wedlock, but had maintained an elaborate system of marriage counseling and of divorce courts—courts with rules far more lenient than those recognized by either Catholic or conservative Protestant Churches in Western Europe. But the State budget continued to provide for the support of the clergy, and the prosecution of priests and prelates for alleged subversive activities was minimal.

A drastic change took place when the Communist Party assumed complete control during December, 1947, following the return of Georgi Dimitrov from Russia. The Constitution signed on the fourth day of that month dealt with religion in the customary Soviet manner: guaranteeing freedom of conscience and religion, and specifically endorsing freedom of worship; on the other hand, decreeing separation of Church and State, and prohibiting political organizations based on religious belief and political activities by the Churches. During February, 1949, statutes were decreed which outlined in detail the relationship of the Churches to the government. Control over ecclesiastical matters was lodged in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, which could hold the recognized authorities of each Church responsible. All such authorities had to be Bulgarian citizens, and to register with the Ministry, which might insist upon the removal from office of any clergyman it deemed undesirable. These laws, which subjected the Church to the

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domination of the State, clearly implied that Orthodoxy was to have an opportunity to qualify as the "people's religion." Note, for example, the language of Section 12:

> Clergymen and other officials guilty of violating the laws, public order, or good morals, or of acting in a manner hostile to the democratic institutions of the State, may, over and above other applicable penalties, be provisionally suspended or removed from office on the request of the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Upon receipt of such a request from the Minister for Foreign Affairs, suspension or removal from office shall be effected immediately by the leadership of the respective religious denomination. If the clergyman is not removed by the responsible leadership, he shall be removed by administrative order.

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We shall now see how the legislation described was put into effect.

In so far as the Orthodox Church is concerned, the story opens with the removal from office of Exarch Stephan I, who was said to be an overly ambitious prelate bent on skillfully juggling the disparate objects of Communist ideology and Christian tradition. Apparently Church and State agreed on his removal to the small town of Karlovo, the former because it deemed him too dictatorial and the latter because it no longer had any use for him. Ecclesiastical authority was lodged anew in the Holy Synod, which had already learned that the Communists took seriously ordinances abolishing religious marriage, prohibiting the teaching of religion in the schools, banning religious observances from military establishments, and subjecting the public to barrages of irreligious propaganda. Absolute dependence upon the State was associated with absolute surrender of traditional privileges.

It must be noted that the Exarch, during his tenure of office, had sounded almost every note in the scale which Dimitrov may have dreamed of as the ideal music for an ideal Church.

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Here is a brief report written by one who was an unhappy eyewitness of the events described:

> On the occasion of the anniversary of the October Revolution in Russia, the Exarch addressed a letter to all the Metropolitans in which he glorified the achievements of the Soviet Union. He also spoke glowingly of the role of the Slavic peoples in history. Finally he lauded Czechoslovakia and emphasized the need for very close relationships between Church and State. At about the same time, Marshal Tito visited Bulgaria, and the Exarch sent a telegram to Dimitrov in which he paid homage to the alliance between Bulgaria and Yugoslavia and expressed the hope that these two great peoples would continue to foster mutual assistance. But the message also stressed the role which the Church had played in the history of the two countries. During the summer of 1947 the Exarch paid a visit to Carlsbad as the guest of the Czechoslovak Government, and took the cure there. During his stay he delivered an address in which he praised the Government of the country; and when the time came for him to enter his name in the Golden Book of the City of Prague he expressed gratitude for the honor and paid his respects to the "Slavic ideal and to the contributions it had made to the triumph of peace and justice in the world." He hailed the formation of the Cominform as a step towards the safeguarding of Slavic solidarity.

The Synod which succeeded to the authority of the Exarch was scarcely less supine. Despite the fact that the Communist Party had ordered that courses in dialectical materialism be offered in the seminaries which trained young men for the priesthood, it commemorated the twenty-fifth anniversary of the death of Lenin. It likewise instructed the clergy to accept membership in the Fatherland Front. The situation is illustrated by an émigré from Sofia, who relates that the editor of the principal Orthodox theological journal had approved an article in which the author expounded the thesis that natural science alone could not answer all questions. He was summoned to the Ministry and made to apologize profusely for the aber-

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ration. At any rate, the Holy Synod was soon reechoing every banal attack on Anglo-American imperialism and applauding every appeal for the Moscow version of "peace." In the summer of 1949, its official journal expressed regret that the center of Roman Catholicism (the Vatican) and the heartland of Protestantism (the United States) had of their own free will blessed a new war and sung the praises of the atomic bomb.

These various attitudes received final binding expression in the series of resolutions on relations between Church and State which the Holy Synod adopted on September 20, 1948: the clergy were authorized to join pro-Communist organizations and to support the collective farm system; government decrees prohibiting the teaching of religion in the schools were endorsed; all priests were warned not to make any statement from their pulpits which might be considered to be political. The Synod assured the government that it stood ready to cooperate in any measure "for the reform of society in accordance with the principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity." For the seventieth birthday of Stalin it addressed a letter, dated December 12, 1949, to all pastors urging them to conduct Divine services for the welfare of the great Russian leader. It also formally endorsed the peace plea with all its might and main.

Yet all this does not mean that the rank and file of the Bulgarian Orthodox clergy betrayed their faith without a struggle. It took the pro-Communist Union of Orthodox Priests a long while to recruit members. Watched constantly by the security police, removed from office for dissident attitudes, often sent to slave-labor camps, the clergy witnessed with foreboding the working out of policies designed to seduce youth, secularize all welfare activity, and subject all preaching, whether oral or written, to censorship by an uncompromisingly Marxist ideological authority. Eventually only one theological school, at Plovdiv, was permitted to remain open. Two theological jour-

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659 nals, one of them the organ of the Communist-dominated
793 Synod, made propaganda at the government's behest. Every-
626 one who gave any indication of fidelity to the Christian creed in its true significance and glory had to reckon with the possibility that he would speedily be sentenced to one of the dreaded prisons—Kolarovgrad, for example—which were always crammed with the unfortunate victims of tyranny.

659 The Orthodox Church having been transformed into an ab-
798 ject lackey of the State, Communist wrath descended on the religious minorities. Protestants were the first victims. Missionaries had come to Bulgaria from Turkey, and had established schools which, despite wars and upheavals, gave a good education to boys and girls. An exemplary woman introduced the kindergarten system and trained native teachers. By the close of World War I, hostility to Protestants had pretty largely died down; and although the small congregations did not grow rapidly they successfully maintained their identities. Their pride and joy was the American College, situated near Sofia. It was closed by the Nazis in 1942 and has not been reopened. The work of the Y.M.C.A. and the Y.W.C.A. was suppressed at the same time, and the Communist regime has not lifted the prohibition.

The legislation adopted during February, 1949 (often re-
ferred to as the Canonical Purity Laws) contained a number
648 of provisions designed to render impossible any religious activity under the auspices of a Church or institution with headquarters outside Bulgaria. It stipulated, for example, that any Church or any clergyman desiring "canonical relations with or aid or gifts from" institutions, organizations, or official personages abroad must secure permission in advance from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. It was presumably under this legislation that fifteen Protestant pastors were brought to trial for high treason during 1949. It was the first large-scale action

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against Protestants in any satellite country, though to be sure Protestant Churches had suffered grievously in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland. The pastors, none of whom had occupied a position of eminence, were confronted with a lengthy list of charges. In particular they had, the Public Prosecutor contended, given military, economic, and political information to representatives of hostile foreign powers. They were also accused of having "spread malicious rumors about Russia." Those indicted—the Reverend Basil Ziapkov, for example—made confessions of the length desired and pleaded for mercy. The Court pronounced sentences of varying severity.

Manifestly this trial was also a blow struck at the prestige of the United States, from which most of the support for the Protestant congregations had come. Its primary effect was, no doubt, that the curtain was rung down on any hopes Bulgarian citizens might have that diplomatic intervention by the West would blunt the edge of the Soviet sickle, or that Washington could defend the interests of Americans in regions under Russian domination. How complete the resulting loss of morale was can be deduced from the official statements issued by the other Churches on the subject of the ordeal to which Protestantism had been subjected. The Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church declared, for example:

> In accordance with our Church's traditional solicitude for fostering the aspirations of the people and maintaining loyalty to the State, the Holy Synod has always exhorted its clergy to look upon themselves as preachers of the Divine Word and as guardians of the Holy Spirit, and to remain aloof from all political influences hostile to the country and its people. We must add that the pastors of the Holy Orthodox Church have consistently obeyed our admonition. Not one of them has been prosecuted by the authorities on account of religious activities.
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> The Holy Synod strongly condemns all subversive activities carried

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735 on by the faithful, all actions detrimental to our People's Republic,
● 658 and anything which may threaten the independence and liberty of our people. And we condemn such things even more strongly when they are carried on by those who profess other creeds.

The statements made by the Catholic bishops, both of the Latin and of the Greek rite, contained professions of loyalty to the government but did not comment on the trial of their Protestant brethren.

653 The Catholic Church wielded an influence in Bulgaria which
687 was wholly disproportionate to its size. Fewer than ten persons
793 in a thousand professed to belong to this Church, which of course was also hampered by the division according to the two rites. But Catholics had played a stirring part in the struggle for liberation from Turkish rule, and so their heroes were eminent in the nation's song and story. Educational institutions created and developed by members of religious orders were likewise held in high esteem, and many of the graduates were prominent in the civil service and the professions. These institutions have been nationalized, and the Church itself is circumscribed by the laws affecting religion. During 1949, the Catholic Bishops acceded to the government's request and sent a message to the United Nations affirming the existence of religious freedom in Bulgaria. Subsequently the lot of both clergy and laity grew steadily worse; but the first spectacular and drastic action taken against the Church was the arrest of a bishop, more than a score of priests, and a number of laymen, on the usual charge of conspiring with a hostile foreign power. The Bishop and three priests were sentenced to death for high treason, and twenty-four priests and twelve laymen received prison sentences. Therewith an almost mortal blow was struck at the life and organized activity of the Church.*

000 * Most of the more than half a million Mohammedans in Bulgaria were of Turkish descent. During 1950 the government began deporting them to Turkey,